

High School!

A Newsletter for California Educational Leaders

Volume 2

September/October 2003

Issue 7

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Highlight Site	2
Helping Teachers Teach and Learners Learn	4
Secondary Literacy Resources	5
When Older Kids Can't Read	6
There is a Crisis in Secondary Literacy	7
Nation's Report Card	8
Technology Project	9
CAHSEE Update	10
Counselor's Corner	11
Funding Opportunities	12
What's New at CDE	13
Conference Calendar	14

A Message from the Superintendent

Welcome back to school! I hope that this 2003-2004 school year will be a successful one for you. I am pleased with the steady progress we have been making in California to improve academic performance, and I look forward to our work together this coming school year.

Several articles in this newsletter focus on literacy, specifically reading and writing. Literacy is a key to academic success and the foundation to achievement in higher education, the job market, citizenship, and personal enrichment. Reading and writing open doors to the rest of the curriculum, and a lack of these skills can be a roadblock to learning in any subject. High school can be our last opportunity to ensure that our students have the literacy skills they need to succeed. Too frequently, developing literacy skills at the secondary level does not have the same urgency as it does in the earlier grades. However, we must incorporate basic literacy skills and strategies in the everyday high school curricula and develop interventions, when necessary, to help those students who need it.

I hope you find this newsletter helpful in addressing the issue of literacy. Thank you for all your hard work, and best wishes for a rewarding year.

Jack O'Connell

State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Content literacy instruction is extremely important as teachers struggle to make their instructional materials accessible, relevant, and interesting to an increasingly diverse student population.

Strategic Teaching and Learning, California Department of Education, 2000

The evidence is quite clear that if students engage in more frequent nonfiction writing, their performance in other academic disciplines improves.

Doug Reeves, The Leader's Guide to Standards, 2002



Highlight Site: Hoover High School

Hoover High School, an urban high school in San Diego, serves a diverse community of new immigrants, as well as long-term residents. Daily we meet the challenges of providing effective instruction in inclusive, multicultural classrooms, as well as federal and state yearly growth targets. Our students are improving, and we attribute their success to effective teaching practices. Research and our experience over the past four years show that strategic instructional practices across the curriculum improve our students' reading and writing, including those for whom English is not their first language.

One of the achievement measures we use at Hoover High School is the Gates-MacGinitie reading assessment. During the 1999-2000 year, the average student read at the 5.9 grade level equivalent. During the 2002 year, the school-wide average increased to an 8.2 grade level equivalent. We are encouraged that the average student now reads more than two grade levels higher than three years ago. In addition, Hoover met the state accountability targets and has had a 62 point gain in the API in three years. While we know that too many students are still not reading at grade level, we also know that significant strides have been made.

Since 1999, our staff has been involved in an ongoing professional development cycle focused on improving students' literacy skills within each subject area. The reflective cycle of plan, teach and assess, reflect and revise, and apply, originally designed by W.E. Deming, has been refined by a committee of teachers and San Diego State University professors. This committee also selected seven literacy strategies that are applicable across all content areas:

- Anticipatory activities (that inspire learning)
- Read alouds and shared reading (in a high school setting)
- Notetaking
- Graphic organizers (for each type of text structure)
- Reciprocal teaching (an active reading process involving questioning, clarifying, summarizing, and predicting)
- Vocabulary development (across the curriculum)
- Writing to learn (for student reflection and informal assessment)

This is the heart of our continuing professional development plan, a process that we believe is vital in the development of a reflective community of teachers.

We knew that our teachers would need ongoing professional development that encouraged growth and expertise in the implementation and practice of effective literacy strategies in all content areas. Our efforts began with the development of a plan to engage teaching staff during monthly prep period meetings. Each month teachers were introduced to, or reacquainted with, a specific literacy strategy - one of seven that our committee had previously selected. Each meeting included a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Hoover High School Profile

Community:	Urban	Student Demographics:
District:	San Diego City Unified	African American – 17%
Enrollment:	2,211	American Indian or Alaska Native - .4%
Grade Levels:	9-12	Asian – 14%
		Filipino - 1%
API for 2002:	484	Hispanic or Latino – 62%
English Learners:	50%	Pacific Islander - .3%
		White (not of Hispanic origin) – 5%



HIGHLIGHT SITE CONTINUED

30-minute presentation by a content area teacher or group of teachers. In their presentation, they focused briefly on the theory behind the practice of each selected strategy. This was followed by a conversation with colleagues about shared successes and struggles. These demonstration lessons built confidence in the presenters and helped create a community of practitioners who are constantly learning and experimenting with effective literacy practices in a variety of content area classrooms.



The Hoover High School staff development committee consists of the director of professional development, the literacy administrator, a peer coach, and practicing teachers. They have served as coaches to the demonstration teachers, preparing them for the monthly meetings. This included pre-conferences with staff developers, followed by strategy implementation and practice in their classrooms with peer observation and support. Eventually each teacher assumed the responsibility for delivering a demo lesson at a future meeting. They each volunteered to demonstrate their efforts at infusing their teaching with one or more of the seven literacy strategies. Through class visits, videotaped lessons, and monthly staff development meetings, we witnessed how teachers refined their style, developed expertise over time, and emerged as reflective practitioners. This was a turning point in our school's staff development. The teaching community as a whole realized that staff development had evolved into a collective responsibility specific to our site. It was no longer a series of lectures presented by a few, but rather a shared experience that all could, and at some point would, participate in. Today we continue monthly meetings with a focus on implementing and fine-tuning literacy instruction.

We are currently involved in the alignment of curriculum to content standards, embedding test preparation into curriculum, and cultivating a climate of literacy through a school-wide daily sustained silent reading for pleasure. Our original six volunteer demonstration teachers were the genesis of our current 30 teachers who are now collegial coaches. These coaches practice the seven literacy teaching strategies, reflect on that practice with each other, and continue the rich dialogue that began four years ago.

Our community of teachers continue to celebrate successes while supporting each other in our challenges. Our successes, supported by administration, have been incremental and steady. This community of teachers, with a variety of opinions and practices, diverse backgrounds and languages, "embrace literacy...as the responsibility of the whole school. While we do not suggest that every content teacher must become a reading teacher, we believe that every secondary teacher can assist in the literacy development of adolescents." (Fisher and Frey, 2003)

By Lee Mongrue, Hoover High School, Peer Coach/Staff Developer <lmongrue@mail.sandi.net> and Rita Elwardi, Hoover High School, Peer Coach/Staff Developer <relwardi@mail.sandi.net>. Their work is under the auspices of Doug Fisher, Ph.D., San Diego State University (SDSU), Director of Professional Development, SDSU City Heights K-12 Collaborative <dfisher@mail.sdsu.edu>.

References

Fisher, Doug, and Nancy Frey. *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Strategies at Work*. Columbus, Ohio: Pearson, Merrill-Prentice Hall, 2003.

Deming, W.E. *Out of the Crisis*. Boston: Massachusetts of Technology Center for Advanced Engineering, 1986.

Helping Teachers Teach and Learners Learn: Secondary Literacy

When students advance from the third grade to the fourth grade, they make a critical transition from learning to read to reading to learn in subject-matter content.

California Reading/English-Language Arts Framework, California Department of Education, 1999

A variety of secondary literacy demonstration sites throughout the state have been identified by the California Department of Education (CDE). These middle and high schools have established multi-faceted initiatives to foster literacy development in all students through virtually every avenue under the control of the school -- in addition to what occurs in English-language arts classes.

All of the models focus on content literacy, the ability to use reading and writing to acquire new content in a given discipline. Content area teachers use reading and writing to serve their primary goal, helping students learn content. In most models, school leadership teams agree on a cluster of research-based strategies to infuse throughout the curriculum. Examples of these strategies can be found in *Strategic Teaching and Learning: Standard-Based Instruction to Promote Content Literacy in Grades Four Through Twelve* (California Department of Education, 2000). In addition to content literacy, these sites have implemented interventions for struggling readers. In some models, strategies fostered within the intervention are also applied in content area classes.

The school library is a natural partner in creating a school-wide culture of reading, writing, and information literacy. Replicated research across the nation shows that student achievement increases (regardless of social and economic factors) when the school library (1) contains a rich array of resources, including technology; and (2) provides professional and paraprofessional staff and collaboration. Many of the secondary literacy demonstration sites have dynamic library media programs with these features.

Each site has created a system-wide model, and each contains usable components and ideas. Some have been in place longer than others, and all are evolving. These demonstration sites are schools in which educators are proud to display the instructional processes that students experience in day-to-day instruction. Collectively, they demonstrate that there is no silver bullet. It takes a concerted effort on many fronts to ensure literacy development for all students.

Hoover High School in San Diego City Unified is one of the secondary literacy sites. (See article on page two). A Web site describing the secondary literacy demonstration sites in further detail is under construction by the CDE staff.

By Beth Breneman, CDE, Reading/Language Arts Leadership Office, (916) 323-5798 or <bbrenema@cde.ca.gov>



Secondary Literacy Resources



Burkhardt, Ross. *Writing for Real: Strategies for Engaging Adolescent Readers*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers, 2002.

Check It Out! Assessing School Library Media Programs. Sacramento: California Department of Education, 1998.

Fisher, Douglas; Nancy Frey; and Douglas Williams. "Reading and Writing in the Content Areas," *Educational Leadership*, vol. 60 (November, 2002).

Gallagher, Kelly. *Reading Reasons: Motivational Mini-Lessons for Middle and High School*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers, 2003.

Marzano, Robert J. *What Works in Schools: Translating Research Into Action*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2003.

Preparing for the Writing Test (CAHSEE), Sacramento: Sacramento County Office of Education, 2002.

Schoenbach, Ruth and others. *Reaching for Understanding: A Guide to Improving Reading in Middle and High School Classrooms*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers, 1999.

Schoenbach, Ruth, and Audrey Fielding. *Building Academic Literacy Set*, San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers, 2003.

Strategic Teaching and Learning: Standards-Based Instruction to Promote Content Literacy in Grades Four Through Twelve. Sacramento: California Department of Education, 2000.

Thoughtful Reading: Teaching Comprehension to Adolescents. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers, 2000. Video.

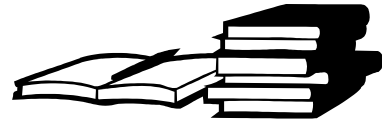
Tovani, Cris. *I Read It, But I Don't Get It*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers, 2000.

Reading/Language Arts Intervention Programs

California State Board of Education--approved intervention programs for reading/language arts include:

- Glencoe/McGraw-Hill: *Sopris West Language!*, 2002
- Hampton-Brown Company: *High Point*, 2001
- Scholastic Inc.: *Scholastic Read 180*, 2002
- SRA/McGraw-Hill: *SRA/Reach*, 2002
- Wright Group/McGraw-Hill: *Fast Track Reading Program*, 2002

When Older Kids Can't Read



The following is a synopsis of an article written by Louisa C. Moats entitled, "When Older Kids Can't Read." Educational Leadership, March, 2001. The full article, including references, can be accessed at <www.scoe.org/topics/reading_corner/pdf/Older_Readers.pdf>. Louisa C. Moats, Ed.D., is project director for a four-year long inteitudinal study of early reading rventions in the Washington, D.C. public schools.

Moats states that, "Both students and educators become frustrated when students beyond third grade display reading difficulties. Research-based reading strategies can build a foundation for reading success in students of all ages." Moats advocates a commitment to applying best practices supported by reading research.

Most reading scientists agree that a core linguistic deficit underlies poor reading at all ages (Catts et al., 1999; Shaywitz et al., 1999). When an individual's reading comprehension is more impaired than his or her listening comprehension, inaccurate and slow word recognition is the most likely cause (Shankweiler et al., 1999).

In her current studies, Moats has found that older students cannot read because they do not like to read, and because they have not read much, they are not familiar with the vocabulary, sentence structure, text organization, and concepts of academic language. Over time, their comprehension skills decline, and they also become poor spellers and writers. "What usually begins as a core phonological and word recognition deficit, often associated with other language weaknesses, becomes a diffuse, debilitating problem with language, spoken and written," Moats says.

Reading intervention grounded in research imparts to older readers the skills they missed in primary grades and can bring them to grade level in one to two years (Torgesen, Wagner, Rashotte, Alexander & Conway 1997). The intervention must match the student's level of reading development, because each stage of growth requires a special focus (Curtis & Longo, 1999). Very poor readers must have their phonological skills strengthened. The inability to identify speech sounds erodes spelling, word recognition, and vocabulary development.

Normally progressing students can read most of the words in their listening vocabulary by fourth or fifth grade. From then on, they learn new vocabulary – primarily by reading – at the rate of several thousand new words per year. Moats believes that word study should be linked to subject matter content and literature taught in class, even if the literature is being read aloud to students. The teacher of comprehension must simultaneously teach students about sentence structure, text cohesion, punctuation, phrasing, and grammar because comprehension can break down at the most basic levels of language processing. Written response to reading can greatly enhance comprehension, but poor readers must have writing skills developed sequentially and cumulatively.

Moats concludes that poor readers can be taught to read if the intervention program has all the necessary components, teachers are prepared and supported, and the student is given time, intensive instruction, and incentives to overcome reading and language challenges. "Given the right approach, students will buy in. In fact, they'll ask why they were allowed to go so far without being taught to read," according to Moats.

By Camille Smith, CDE, Middle and High School Improvement Office, <casmith@cde.ca.gov>

There is a Crisis in Secondary Literacy!

The Challenges

Throughout the state, high schools are grappling with the challenges of teaching standards-based curricula to students who do not have the basic skills to read and comprehend classroom text. The 2002 data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicate that over 35 percent of fourth grade students in the United States lack basic reading skills. (See page seven for more NAEP information.) What are the implications for secondary schools? Upon entering high school, 25 percent of students still lack basic reading skills, about 40 percent lack the skills necessary to access grade-level text across all content areas, and an additional 30 percent lack the ability to critically examine or elaborate upon what they have read. These data are not surprising to California's high school teachers. Everyday, teachers are forced to find different ways to teach content, knowing that large numbers of their students are unable to read or comprehend their text.

In recent years, well-deserved attention and resources have been given to K-3 reading instruction. However, there has not been the same sense of urgency at the secondary level. Yet the data continue to tell us that we need to incorporate basic reading skills and strategies into the everyday middle and high school curricula.

The Barrier to Confronting the Crisis Is Most Often the System

Secondary teachers and administrators who understand that a lack of reading skills is the root cause of poor student achievement have begun to implement interventions. Some have started by implementing intensive interventions to teach basic reading skills. Others have introduced interventions to teach students strategies to access content area text. The fact is, schools that are serious about meeting the reading and literacy needs of all their students must have a comprehensive literacy approach that includes both types of interventions throughout their school. However, most secondary schools continue to operate within an outdated system that includes an inflexible master schedule and traditional beliefs about instructional delivery that act as barriers to meeting the reading and literacy needs of all students.

The Secondary Literacy Support Network

In 2001, WestEd created the Secondary Literacy Support Network (SLSN) to assist those schools that were ready and committed to implementing a comprehensive literacy approach. The design of SLSN was built on the belief that most secondary schools have pieces and parts of a reading/literacy program, but few have made the changes to their system necessary to meet the needs of students school-wide. SLSN is a step-by-step, research-based, systems approach to professional development. It provides a framework that guides schools through a process of diagnosis, intervention, data analysis, and implementation support in order to address students who can't, don't, or won't read.

SLSN staff members, along with a cadre of respected experts in the field of literacy, all contribute as trainers during the 13-day SLSN professional development series. Our trainers work as a team and as individuals to present the SLSN training modules and provide technical assistance and coaching on site to middle and high schools. SLSN staff and consultants have worked with schools throughout California and the United States to improve literacy instruction for middle schools, high schools, English learners and other diverse student populations. Schools that are contemplating a comprehensive literacy approach should contact WestEd at www.wested.org/stratlit/ for more information.

By Donna Covey, WestEd, Director of the Secondary Literacy Support Network,
<dcovey@wested.org>



Nation's Report Card

The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) reports 2002 reading and writing achievement results on its Web site <<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>>. Of special interest are the middle and high school results. The NAEP Web site contains information about different kinds of writing including persuasive essays, one of the possible types of essays chosen for the CAHSEE. The site also has performance data, scoring guides, and sample student responses for each prompt. Below is an example of a grade 12 writing prompt for persuasive writing. This was used in a previous NAEP study.

Persuasive Writing

Persuasive writing emphasizes the reader. Its primary aim is to influence others to take some action or to bring about change. Persuasive writing may contain much information — facts, details, examples, comparisons, statistics, or anecdotes. Its main purpose, however, is not simply to inform but to persuade. This type of writing involves a clear awareness of what arguments might most affect the audience being addressed. Writing persuasively also requires the use of critical thinking skills, such as analysis, inference, synthesis, and evaluation.

Persuasive writing is called for in a variety of situations. It may involve responding to a request for advice by giving an opinion and providing sound reasons to support it. It may also involve presenting an argument in such a way that a particular audience will find it convincing. When there is opposition, persuasive writing may entail refuting arguments that are contrary to the writer's point of view.

In all persuasive writing, authors must choose the approach they will use. They may, for instance, use emotional or logical appeals or an accommodating or demanding tone. Regardless of the situation or approach, persuasive writers must be concerned with having a particular desired effect upon their readers, beyond merely adding to knowledge of the topic presented.

Writing Prompt – 12th Grade

Your school is sponsoring a voter registration drive for 18-year-old high school students. You and three of your friends are talking about the project. Your friends say the following:

Friend One: "I'm working on the young voters' registration drive. Are you going to come to it and register? You're all 18, so you can do it. We're trying to help increase the number of young people who vote, and it shouldn't be too hard – I read that the percentage of 18- to 20- year-olds who vote increased in recent years. We want that percentage to keep going up."

Friend Two: "I'll be there. People should vote as soon as they turn 18. It's one of the responsibilities of living in a democracy."

Friend Three: "I don't know if people should even bother to register. One vote in an election isn't going to change anything."

Do you agree with friend two or three? Write a response to your friends in which you explain whether you will or will not register. Be sure to explain why and support your position with examples from your reading or experience. Try to convince the friend with whom you disagree that your position is the right one.

By Kelly Goughnour, CDE, Middle and High School Improvement Office,
<kgoughno@cde.ca.gov>



Making a Difference with Technology:

San Marcos Pass, Safety Mission Project

Santa Ynez Valley Union High School Profile

Community:	Rural	Student Demographics:
District:	Santa Ynez Valley Union High	American Indian or Alaska Native—3%
Enrollment:	1,089	Asian—2%
Grade Levels:	9-12	Hispanic or Latino—24%
		White (not of Hispanic origin) - 70%
API for 2002:	700	
English Learners:	10%	

A focus on the student learning process with service learning projects is important for Santa Ynez Valley Union High School. One of its classrooms is populated with preserved animals killed while crossing Highway 154, a visible reminder of the dangers this road poses. The 19-mile stretch of twisting, mountainous roadway over the San Marcos Pass in Santa Barbara County serves as the main route into the community. With a yearly average increase of nine percent commuter traffic, the frequency and severity of accidents has escalated, taking a severe toll on human and animal users.

Students in Chip Fenenga's Environmental and Spatial Technology (EAST) class collaborated to bring attention to the dangers posed by Highway 154. The class worked with the California Highway Patrol (CHP) and local law enforcement and transportation officials to solicit information about the roadway. Students used GPS (Global Positioning Software) and GIS (Geographic Interface Software) to map four years' worth of CHP data to analyze accidents. Students gathered data on the location, severity, frequency, and mitigating factors (i.e., weather) of accidents. They presented their findings, as well as provided information on preventing accidents, to teachers, students, and the community. The education component of their project included creating PowerPoint and local cable presentations, an informational brochure, a Web site <www.syvpirates.org/east/hwy/highway.html>, and a video.

Students used twenty-first century skills such as teamwork, collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. Several academic content standards were addressed through the process of identifying and implementing a project to answer a critical community need. The academic content standards applied during this project are found under the following headings.

English-Language Arts:

- *Structural Features of Informational Materials*
- *Research and Technology*
- *Writing and Speaking Applications*
- *Written and Oral Language Conventions*

Mathematics:

- *Probability and Statistics*
- *Geometry*
- *Mathematical Analysis*

The content standards can be found at <www.cde.ca.gov/standards>. Students used real-world skills as they worked together to prevent further accidents to visitors and members of their community. They learned a great deal during the process of this service learning project and provided a tangible benefit to their community as well. For more information, contact Mr. Chip Fenenga, Santa Ynez Valley Union High, (805) 688-6487.

By Joyce Hinkson, CDE, Education Technology Office, <jhinkson@cde.ca.gov>



California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) Update

At its July 2003 meeting, the State Board of Education (SBE) postponed the requirement to pass the CAHSEE as a condition for graduation for the Class of 2006. Therefore, students in the classes of 2004 and 2005 will not be required to pass the CAHSEE to receive a high school diploma. The SBE's action was based on the findings of an independent study conducted in spring 2003, as required by *Education Code* Section 60857. The study focused on the test development process and the implementation of standards-based instruction in California public schools. Key findings concluded that:

- Development of the CAHSEE meets all of the professional testing standards for use as a graduation requirement.
- Requirement of the CAHSEE has been a major factor in the dramatically increased coverage of state academic content standards at the middle and high schools.
- Effectiveness of standards-based instruction will improve for each succeeding class after 2004.

The SBE also directed the California Department of Education (CDE) to reduce the length of the exam from three days to two days, as well as make several changes to the exam blueprint. The blueprint changes are summarized in the August 2003 CAHSEE *Assessment Notes*. The new blueprints are posted on the CAHSEE Web site <www.cde.ca.gov/statetests/cahsee>. The 2003 CAHSEE teacher guides and study guides reflect the blueprint changes. The next administration of the exam will be held in February 2004 to tenth grade students (class of 2006), and the new testing schedule is available on the CAHSEE Web site. The spring CAHSEE results will continue to be used in calculating the Academic Performance Index (API) for state accountability purposes and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) to meet federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements.

Due to the postponement, the CDE will now provide districts with one study guide for each student in the class of 2006. Pearson Education will print the study guides, using the district enrollment figures on the CDE's DataQuest Web site <<http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>>. Every district will automatically receive a 5 percent overage of study guides.

A Certificate of Accomplishment that school districts may use to award students in the classes of 2004 and 2005 who have passed the CAHSEE is available to district CAHSEE coordinators on the secure Web site at <<http://cahsee.ets.org>>. The CAHSEE logo is also available through the Web site if districts prefer to develop a seal for students as a means of recognition.

A secure form of the exam, based on the original blueprint, will be released to districts in October. Districts may use this form to assess students in the classes of 2004 and 2005 who have not passed the exam and want to earn the CAHSEE Certificate of Accomplishment. The released form must be administered and scored locally.

The first Internet posting of CAHSEE 2002-03 annual results will be on or about October 10, 2003. Please visit the Web site for further details and contact the CAHSEE Office at (916) 445-9449 with questions.

By Jessica Valdez, CDE, Standards and Assessment Division,
<jvaldez@cde.ca.gov>



Counselor's Corner

To D or Not to D... That is the Prerequisite



In many high schools, the course prerequisite of C or better has been a point of discussion for several years. Many mathematics and foreign language departments prefer a prerequisite, and other departments may request one as well.

The Problem

In most districts, a D is a passing grade for which credit is issued. However, with regards to the pre-requisite policy, school counselors have started asking questions:

1. Should students who receive a D grade be allowed to pass on to the next level even though they have not met the prerequisite?
2. Should students repeat the course until they earn a C or better, even though they have already earned a passing grade?
3. What impact would repeating a grade have on the students' ability to earn enough credits to graduate?

For Example

In XYZ School District, school counselors wanted to move students forward to geometry if they were taking algebra for the third, fourth, fifth or sixth time, but they were hand-tied by the curriculum guide and the belief system of the math department. To further complicate matters, it appeared that each of the math departments at the three comprehensive high schools in the district had a different policy:

1. Students with a D may pass forward if it is in their best interest.
2. Only students on the "special list" by the math department may pass forward.
3. No students may pass forward if they have a D, no matter who they are.

Further, at the school site requiring the C to progress, graduation rates were affected, as students were not earning the 30 credits required (repeating a course provides no credit).

Show Me the Data

The counselors in XYZ School District decided to look at the data and address the math department about modifying its policies. The counselors compared the first and second semester grades of 71 students – 14 students who earned a D in their Algebra class and then repeated the course, and 57 students who earned a D in their Algebra class and went on to a higher-level math class.

Results

The table below indicates that students who advanced to the next level in mathematics had a higher passing rate and lower failure rate than did the students required to repeat the same course to earn a C or better grade.

Student Grades	Students Who Repeated Algebra	Students Who Went On To Geometry
D to an F	50%	45%
D to a D	36%	30%
D to an A, B, or C	14%	25%

TO D OR NOT TO D CONTINUED

Analysis

This is a small sampling, but the percentages indicate that students were more likely to pass Geometry even though they received a D grade in a prerequisite course, than they were to pass the Algebra course if they took it again. For 55 percent of the students, moving to the next grade level resulted in earning credits towards graduation, while none of the repeaters earned any more credit. To be fair, this does not take into account the characteristics of the D students who are perceived as being able to move on and those D students who are perceived as not being able to move on. It is also impossible to account for the meaning of D grades between teachers.

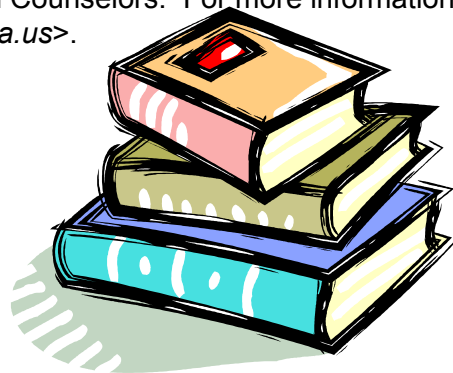
Conclusion

Following a presentation of this data to the curriculum council, the prerequisite language in the curriculum guide was changed from "C or better" to "C or better is highly recommended." As a result, students may be advised to retake the course once in order to meet college requirements. But, those that have not met the prerequisite twice would be allowed to move on to the next math course in order to gain the necessary credits to graduate. In addition, the guide now states that, "No student will be denied access to any course so long as he or she has passed the appropriate prerequisite (passing is a D or higher)." While this is not a formal research study, the XYZ District school counselors did use data to effect policy change by advocating for their students' needs.

By Trish Hatch, Ph.D., Coordinator, Student Services, Moreno Valley Unified School District; Lori Holland, Assistant Principal, Mountain View Middle School, Moreno Valley Unified School District; and Paul Meyers, President, California Association of School Counselors. For more information, you may contact Paul Meyers at <pmeyers@humboldt.k12.ca.us>.

Commonly used standards, such as those for written expression, should be reinforced in every subject. In other words, spelling, capitalization, and grammar always count.

Doug Reeves, [The Leader's Guide to Standards](#), 2002



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Math and Reading Professional Development. The reimbursement grant program provides funds for teacher professional development in mathematics and reading/language arts. Applications are being accepted through May 15, 2004. <www.cde.ca.gov/funding/wwwlist.asp>

Advanced Placement Test Fee Reimbursement Program. The purpose of the Advanced Placement (AP) test fee reimbursement program is to remove the financial barriers that prevent many low-income students in comprehensive high schools from taking the AP course test. This funding supports the payment of student test fees for the AP program. Due November 14, 2003. <www.cde.ca.gov/funding/wwwlist.asp>

Adolescent Literacy in the Content Areas

A collection of resources on adolescent literacy in the content areas is available from the Knowledge Loom Web site developed by the Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University. www.knowledgeloom.org/adlit/index.shtml

Building Reading Proficiency at the Secondary Level: A Guide to Resources

This guide presents background information on building student reading proficiency at the secondary level and includes resources that teachers can use with struggling secondary readers. www.sedl.org/pubs/reading16/

California Writing Project

The California Writing Project (CWP) is a network of 18 sites housed on college and university campuses. Every year over 30,000 teachers at all grade levels and many different disciplines, participate in CWP programs. <http://csmp.ucop.edu/cwp>

California Reading List

This Web site has been developed to assist parents and students in selecting books written at a level of difficulty that corresponds with a child's ability to read. The reading list is for all grades. www.cde.ca.gov/statetests/star/readinglist.html

International Reading Association

The International Reading Association focuses on adolescent reading with a position paper, research, and other articles. www.reading.org/focus/adolescent.html

Reading in the Content Areas

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) is currently spotlighting the teaching of reading in social studies. www.mcrel.org

What's New at the California Department of Education

Web Site

Remember to check out what's new at the CDE at www.cde.ca.gov. The following areas of interest are currently listed in the "What's New" section.

- Title I Program Improvement Appeal Decision
- Superintendent's Challenge 2003 to Improve School Nutrition and Student Health



Highly Qualified Teacher Requirements

The CDE staff is in process of developing a resource guide for meeting the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) teacher qualification requirements. The guide is intended as a user-friendly resource for school district personnel and teachers. The guide contains the NCLB requirements, general information, guidelines, and several templates to determine if a teacher meets the qualification requirements and, if not, options such as using the High Objective Uniform State Standard Evaluation (HOUSSE) process to become compliant. Also contained in the guide are suggested forms for use by school districts, selected questions and answers, and a list of resources. The resource guide is expected to be available soon and will be posted on the CDE Web site.

By Robert Cervantes, CDE, Curriculum Leadership Office, rcervant@cde.ca.gov

High School!



California Department of Education

School Improvement Division

Wendy Harris, Director

1430 "N" Street

Sacramento, CA 95814

Kelly Goughnour, Editor

Middle and High School Improvement
Office

E-mail: <kgoughno@cde.ca.gov>

Phone: (916) 319-0492

Fax: (916) 322-3390

CONFERENCE CALENDAR

Los Angeles County Office of Education

CAHSEE Intervention Fair (no cost)

English-language arts – October 22, 2003

Los Angeles, CA

(562) 922-6598 (Gina Rosas)

California Reading Association

37th Annual Conference

November 6-8, 2003

Town and Country Hotel, San Diego, California

<kathy@californiareads.org> or (714) 435-1983

California School Library Association

Annual Conference

November 12-15, 2003

Convention Center, Ontario, California

(909) 989-1600 x2065

Los Angeles County Office of Education

Differentiated Instruction Workshop – Grades 4-12

November 18-19 and December 9, 2003

Los Angeles, CA

<sanchez_raynette@laoe.edu> or (562) 922-6404

California League of High Schools

Annual Conference

November 21-23, 2003

Marriott Hotel, Monterey, California

<info@clhs.net> or (562) 430-3136

McREL – Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

Teaching Reading in the Content Areas

February 2004 (call for specific day)

Aurora, CO

(303) 632-5547 (Wendy Grunewald)

Got E-mail?

Join the CDE *HIGH SCHOOL!* listserv at <www.cde.ca.gov/shsd/nwesletter/> to receive notices about upcoming issues. If you have comments, contributions, or suggestions, please contact Kelly Goughnour at <kgoughno@cde.ca.gov>. Your ideas and suggestions are welcome.